

.. THEATER OF WAR ..

a game of skill and strategy for the unexpanded VIC-20



by Ghislain de Blois

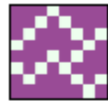
(with special thanks to orion70 for alternate graphics + help with the manual)



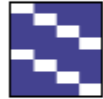
INTRODUCTION. It is Spring 1943. After the debacle of the Wehrmacht at Stalingrad, the German High Command has decided to regroup to secure our position on the Eastern Front. Once the offensive is regained, the objective is to strike a final swift blow against the heart of the Soviet Capital. While you will be severely outnumbered, there is a dearth of quality enemy officers due to Stalin's Great Purge of military commanders who he deemed not loyal to pure communist ideology. You should use the enemy's inferior strategy to your advantage. Every unit you deploy will have strengths and weaknesses. Use them wisely!



THE GAME SCREEN. The top of the screen represents the game map where units are deployed from their bases; the Iron Cross at the bottom left is where the human player places them, the Soviet flag at the upper right is where the computer player places its units. Terrain affects movement—it is impassable by most ground units, or slow down movement for those that can pass it.



ROCKS/MOUNTAINS



WATER/LAKES



TREES/FOREST

The bottom of the screen will show the following data information:

RESERVE represents resources that can be used to deploy units. You begin each level with 100 of these, plus a bonus reserve for every enemy unit that you've destroyed while the enemy begins with 100 multiplied by the level number.

SUPPLY represents the number of reserve units you receive at the end of every turn (after resolving all movement and combat). You lose one supply point for every unit of yours that is destroyed (same thing with the enemy when he loses a unit). However, your supply rating never goes lower than 1, so you always have a chance to build units in future turns. You begin each level with 10 of these, plus a bonus supply point for every 10 enemy units you've destroyed. The enemy gets 10 of these multiplied by the level number.

FIGHTER represents the number of fighter aircraft you have.

BOMBER represents the number of bomber aircraft you have.



THE BEGINNING OF YOUR TURN. You are prompted to deploy units. You can exit this phase of the turn by pressing the SPACE bar. You will be asked to press a corresponding key from 1-7 to build the following:

1. SOLDIER -- Cost 10 reserve points. These can move 2 spaces and even move through forested areas. They have the following attack ratings:

vs soldier: NORMAL attack

vs truck: NORMAL attack

vs tank: WEAK attack

vs anti-tank gun: STRONG attack

vs anti-aircraft gun: STRONG attack



2. TRUCK -- Cost 20 reserves. Movement: 4 spaces (cannot move through rough terrain). Think of this unit as a form of motorized infantry.

vs soldier: NORMAL attack
vs truck: NORMAL attack
vs tank: WEAK attack
vs anti-tank gun: NORMAL attack
vs anti-aircraft gun: NORMAL attack



3. TANK -- Costs 30 reserve points. Movement: 3 spaces, and can also move through water areas.

vs soldier: STRONG attack
vs truck: STRONG attack
vs tank: NORMAL attack
vs anti-tank gun: WEAK attack
vs anti-aircraft gun: NORMAL attack



4. ANTI-TANK GUN -- Costs 10 reserve points. Movement: 1 space, can only move through clear areas. These are useful to deploy when you need to defend against an oncoming onslaught of enemy tanks.

vs soldier: WEAK attack
vs truck: WEAK attack
vs tank: STRONG attack
vs anti-tank gun: NORMAL attack
vs anti-aircraft gun: WEAK attack



5. ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN -- Costs 10. Moves: 1 (only through clear). These are used primarily for attacking enemy aircraft when they fly overhead. Very useful for protecting ground units against bombers.

vs soldier: WEAK attack
vs truck: WEAK attack
vs tank: WEAK attack
vs anti-tank gun: WEAK attack
vs anti-aircraft gun: NORMAL attack
vs fighter: NORMAL attack
vs bomber: STRONG attack



6. FIGHTER -- Costs 20. They are not deployed on the screen but are rather hidden

on the respective player's side of the screen. When they attack, they fly a random path to the other side to attack other air units. They attack other fighters first, and when those are eliminated, they then attack bombers.

vs fighter: NORMAL attack
vs bomber: STRONG attack



7. BOMBER -- Costs 30. These are deployed in the same manner as fighters, however when they fly their random flight path from one side of the screen to the other, they do not attack other air units but rather enemy ground units.

vs soldier: NORMAL attack
vs truck: STRONG attack
vs tank: WEAK attack
vs anti-tank gun: NORMAL attack
vs anti-aircraft gun: WEAK attack



STRONG ATTACK denotes a 75% chance of scoring a hit.
NORMAL ATTACK denotes a 50% chance of scoring a hit.
WEAK ATTACK denotes a 25% chance of scoring a hit.

When you deploy units, they are placed right next to your flag. You are not allowed to deploy units to those spaces that are already occupied.

After you finished deploying, you can now move your units. The game will highlight the unit you're about to move in light blue. You can use the following keys to move your unit:

8	1	2
7		3
6	5	4

You can move the unit for the unit's designated number of spaces. You cannot move in rough terrain except for soldier (which can move through forest) and tank (which can move through water). Moving through forest and water (if allowed), will cost an extra movement point. To attack an enemy unit, just place a unit right next to it, and if you still have a free movement point, just "move" towards the enemy unit and you will attempt to attack it.

Mountainous or rocky terrain is considered unpassable by ALL ground units.

You can choose not to move a unit by simply pressing the space bar. You might want to do this in order to keep units out of range from enemy units, or that you prefer to hold the position there.

After you've finished moving a unit, the game will move on to the next unit until the process of moving all units is done.

After ground movements/attacks are done, the air combat phase will commence. All of the deployed air units will fly from your side of the screen to the enemy's side. See fighter/bomber descriptions above to learn how air combat is resolved.

Once air combat is finished, it is the computer's turn to deploy and move units, following by the air combat phase which will end it's turn.



THE GOAL OF THE GAME. To defeat the enemy, you must capture it's flag, after which you will progress to the next level. But with each succeeding level, the computer opponent gets progressively stronger, while you start each level with the same strength as the first level + a score bonus for reserves, and a level bonus for your supply rating. So in order to obtain additional resources at future levels, you should attempt to destroy enemy units before progressing to the next level. You get a number of bonus reserve points at the next level that is equal to the number of units you've destroyed. Your SCORE is denoted in between levels (and at the end of the game). So, if you finish a level, and the score shown is this:

SCORE: 0014-0008

That means that so far, you've destroyed 14 enemy units while you've lost 8 units. But as a result of destroying 14 units, you receive 14 bonus reserve points for the next level. This might not seem like much now, but the effects of your score is cumulative so these will become helpful in the much later levels.

The game gets progressively more difficult as you complete each level. If you capture the enemy's flag at level 5, you will have accomplished what was considered nearly impossible in 1943: the capture of Moscow and the destruction of the Red Army.



SOME TIPS. If you're unable to afford to deploy air units, consider deploying some anti-aircraft guns. These will be useful to shoot down enemy aircraft if their flight paths coincide with your A-A gun's position. Every successful hit you score means you deplete the enemy's supply rating along with a small reserve bonus for the next level.

Tanks have the best defense against bombers, so you can deploy these the most safely onto the battlefield. However, they are quite weak against anti-tank guns. Once you deplete the enemy's bombers, you will want to deploy some soldiers towards the enemy's base to attack anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns.

Trucks, while being quite mobile on the ground, have the worst defense against bombers. Therefore, you shouldn't deploy these until you are relatively safe from bombing attacks. Or better yet, deploy them and hide them behind A-A guns for added protection.

If the enemy has failed to deploy much anti-aircraft artillery, it might be useful to deploy some fighter aircraft in order to score a few casualties against the enemy's air superiority.

While it seems unfair that the computer player is given more resources and supply points at later levels, it's AI is not that strong, so you will have to use your ingenuity and devise strategies to overcome the sheer numerical odds.

TWO PLAYER GAME. Also included is a two player version where you and a friend can play head-to-head. You can choose the size/scope of the battle from a scale of 1 (small skirmish) to 9 (grand battle).

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